

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3492

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 2862

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PERPR, PINT, SHUM, PA

SUBJECT: LAIMDO AFFAIR: CONFRONTATIONAL TONE BEGINS TO DISAPPEAR

REF: ASUNCION 2849

1. THE CONFRONTATIONAL TONE PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED BY THOSE CONNECTED WITH THE OFFICIAL COLORADOR PARTY, WITH THEIR CHARGES OF U.S. INTERVENTION OVER THE LAINO CASE, HAS BEEN GRADUALLY DISAPPEARING. IT HAS BEEN REPLACED IN THE COLORADO PARTY'S NEWSPAPER "PATRIA" WITH A FAWNING APPROACH WHICH MAINTAINS THE PROBLEMS WERE ALL SEMANTICS AND NOT EVERYTHING IS

CLEAR. "HOY" HAS GIVEN UP ITS ANGRY ANTI-CARTER ADMINISTRATION ATTACKS. IT HAS NOW ADOPTED A LINE THAT THE PARAGUAYANS REALIZE THE LAINO ARREST WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN AN IMPROPER MANNER BUT THAT THEY CAN SETTLE THE PROBLEM BY THEMSELVES WITHOUT EXTERNAL PRESSURE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN EDITORIAL NOTE PLACED AT THE END OF ITS STORY ON SENATOR KENNEDY'S PRESS STATEMENT ON THE LAINO AFFAIR, "HOY" SAYS THAT

THE U.S. IS ABLE TO DECIDE TO SUSPEND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO PARAGUAY WITHOUT RESORTING TO EXCUSES RELATING TO PARAGUAY'S INTERNAL SITUATION IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY SUCH A DECISION. "HOY" AND "PATRIA" TOGETHER REFLECT
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THE VIEW OF A MAJORITY OF COLORADO PARTY MEMBERS.

2. AT THE BASTILLE DAY RECEPTION, PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDANT HHAPPALARDO, WHO WAS OUT-OF-TOWN DURING MOST OF THE PAST WEEK, GAVE THE AMBASSADOR HIS USUAL INCOHERENT AND CONTRADICTORY PRESENTATION OF EVENTS. IN IT HE CHARACTERIZED THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT ON THE LAINO AFFAIR AS

DIRECT INTERVENTION IN PARAGUAY'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE SAID THAT WHILE THE U.S. EXERTED SUCH PRESSURES THEY WOULD NEVER ACT TO RELEASE LAINO. HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOP WOULD TRY LAINO FOR POLITICAL CONSPIRACY

AND THEN WOULD PROBABLY LET HIM GO.

3. PAPPALARDO HOWEVER SEEMED IMPRESSED BY AMBJ SADOR'S ADVICE THAT THE KIDNAPPING OF LAINO HAD SO FLAWED THE PROCESS THAT THE BEST PARAGUAY COULD DO TO EXTRICATE ITSELF WOULD BE TO LET HIM OUT RIGHT AWAY. PAPPALARDO THEN CONFIRMED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO FIND A LEGAL WAY OUT OF THIS PROBLEM SITUATION. THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT THE ONLY LEGAL WAY OUT WAS TO HAVE THE JUDGE DECIDE IMMEDIATELY THAT THERE IS NO CASE AGAINST LAINO.

4. COMMENT: IN SPITE OF PAPPALARDO'S STATEMENT, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ONLY HOPE OF GETTING THE GOP TO RELEASE LAINO IS BY STRONG OUTSIDE PRESSURE BY

US AND OTHERS.
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